

# THE GOODNESS OF GODS

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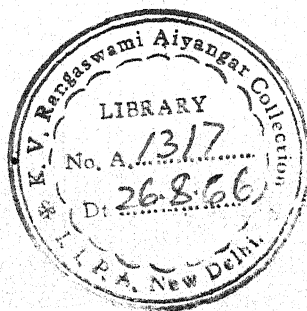
# THE GOODNESS OF GODS

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## FOREWORD

THE authorities for most of the facts stated in this book are given in my work, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, in two volumes, published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co. (second edition, reprinted in 1923 and 1926).

E. W.

*Burpham, Guildford,*  
*April, 1926.*

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## CHAPTER I

### The Belief in Supernatural Beings

**G**ODS may be defined as supernatural beings who are objects of a regular cult and between whom and their worshippers there are established and more or less permanent relationships.

Men distinguish between phenomena which they are familiar with and consequently ascribe to "natural" causes, and other phenomena which seem to them unfamiliar and mysterious and are therefore looked upon as "supernatural" or are supposed to spring from "supernatural" causes. We meet with this distinction among savages as well as civilized races. It may be that in the mind of a savage the natural and the supernatural often overlap, that no definite line can be drawn between the phenomena which he refers to one class and those which he refers to the other; but he certainly sees a difference between events of everyday occurrence or ordinary objects of nature and other events or objects which fill him with a feeling of wonder or mysterious awe. The germ of such a distinction is found even in the lower animal world. The horse fears the whip, but it does not make him shy; on the other hand, he may shy when he sees an umbrella opened before him or a paper moving on the ground. The whip is well known to the horse, whereas the moving paper or the umbrella is strange, uncanny, let us say "supernatural." Dogs and cats are alarmed by an unusual noise or appearance, and remain uneasy till they have by examination satisfied themselves of the nature of its cause. Even a lion is scared by an unexpected noise or the sight of an unfamiliar object; and we are told of a tiger which stood trembling and roaring in a paroxysm of fear when a mouse tied by a string to a stick had been inserted into its cage.

The supernatural, like the natural, may be looked upon

in the light of mechanical energy, which discharges itself without the aid of any volitional activity on the part of a supernatural being and may be utilized even by ordinary individuals in magical practices.<sup>1</sup> But in the present connection we are concerned with supernatural beings only, who are objects of religious worship, although they, too, may at times become victims to magical coercion on the part of men. That the objects of religious worship, as well as the forces applied in magic, are fundamentally more or less mysterious, awe-inspiring, supernatural, seems to me to be a well-established fact, in spite of Durkheim's assertion that the idea of the mysterious has a place in a small number of advanced religions only. This is testified by language. The most prominent belief in the religion of the North American Indians was their theory of *manitou*—that is, of "a spiritual and mysterious power thought to reside in some material form." The word is Algonkin, but all the tribes had some equivalent for it. Thus the Dakota express the essential attribute of their deities by the term *wakan*, which signifies anything which they cannot comprehend, "whatever is wonderful, mysterious, superhuman, or supernatural." The Navaho word *digi'n* likewise means "sacred, divine, mysterious, or holy"; and so does the Hidatsa term *mahopa*. In Fiji "the native word expressive of divinity is *kalou*, which, while used to denote the people's highest notion of a god, is also constantly heard as a qualification of anything great or marvellous." The Maori of New Zealand applied the word *atua*, which is generally translated as "god," not only to spirits of every description, but to various phenomena not understood, such as menstruation and foreign marvels—a compass, for instance, or a barometer. The natives of Madagascar, according to Ellis, designate by the term *ndriamanitra*, or god, everything that exceeds the capacity of their understanding. "Whatever is new and useful and extraordinary is called god. . . . Rice, money, thunder and lightning, and earthquakes, are all called god. . . . *Taratasy*, or book, they call god, from its wonderful capacity of speaking by merely looking at it."

The testimony of language is corroborated by facts

<sup>1</sup> For the author's views on the relation between magic and religion see the Introduction to his recent work, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (London, 1926).

relating to the nature of those objects which are most commonly worshipped. A great cataract, a difficult and dangerous ford in a river, a spring bubbling up from the ground, a volcano, a high mountain, an isolated rock, a curious or unusually large tree, intoxicants and stimulants, animals of an unusual size or appearance, persons suffering from some abnormality, such as deformity, albinism, or madness—all are looked upon by savages with superstitious regard or are propitiated with offerings. The attribution of miraculous power to a certain object or being may be due to direct experience of some effect produced by it, as in the case of a medicinal plant, or a poisonous snake, or a miracle-working spring, or a Christian or Muhammadan saint. Or it may be based on the inference that objects of a strange and mysterious appearance also possess strange and mysterious powers. This inference, too, is in a way supported by facts. The unusual appearance of the object makes an impression on the person who sees it, and predisposes him to the belief that the object is endowed with secret powers. If then anything unusual actually happens in its neighbourhood or shortly after it has been seen, the strange event is attributed to the influence of the strange object. Thus a Siberian tribe came to regard the camel as the smallpox demon because, just when the animal had appeared among them for the first time with a passing caravan, the smallpox broke out. Of the British Guiana Indian we are told by Sir Everard Im Thurn that if his eye falls upon a rock in any way abnormal or curious, and if shortly after any evil happens to him, he regards rock and evil as cause and effect and perceives a spirit in the rock.

The dead are objects of worship much more frequently than the living. While the human individual consisting of body and soul is as a rule well known, the disembodied soul, seen only in dreams and visions, is a mysterious being which inspires the survivors with awe. Among all the phenomena of nature none is more wonderful and impressive than thunder, and none seems more generally to have given rise to religious veneration. But with growing reflection man finds a mystery even in events of daily occurrence. The Vedic poet, when he sees the sun moving freely through the heavens, asks how it comes that it does not fall downward, although "unpropped beneath, not

fastened firm, and downward turned"; and it seems to him a miracle that the sparkling waters of all rivers flow into one ocean without ever filling it. "Verily," says the Koran, "in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, are signs to those possessed of minds."

Startling events are ascribed to the activity not only of visible but of invisible supernatural agents. Thus sudden or strange diseases are at the lower stages of civilization commonly supposed to be occasioned by a supernatural being, who has taken up his abode in the sick person's body or otherwise sent the disease. Among the North American Indians "the storms and tempests were generally thought to be produced by ærial spirits from hostile lands." Livingstone wrote with regard to the South African natives visited by him: "Everything not to be accounted for by common causes, whether of good or evil, is ascribed to the Deity." With the progress of science the chain of natural causes is extended, and, as Livy puts it, it is left to superstition alone to see the interference of the deity in trifling matters. Among ourselves the ordinary truths of science are so generally recognized that in this domain God is seldom supposed to interfere. On the other hand, with regard to social events, the causes of which are often hidden, the idea of Providence is still constantly needed to fill up the gap of human ignorance.

Man's belief in supernatural agents, then, is an attempt to explain strange and mysterious phenomena which suggest a volitional cause. The assumed cause is the will of a supernatural being. Such beings are thus, in the first place, conceived as volitional. But a being who has a will must have a mind, with emotions, desire, and a certain amount of intelligence. Neither the savage nor ourselves can imagine a volitional being who has nothing but a will. If an object of nature, therefore, is looked upon as a supernatural agent, mentality and life are at the same time attributed to it as a matter of course. This I take to be the real origin of animism. It is hardly correct to say that "as the objects of the visible world are conceived as animated, volitional, and emotional, they may be deemed the originators of those misfortunes of which the true cause is unknown." This is to reverse the actual order of ideas. Inanimate things are conceived as volitional, emotional,

and animate, when and because they are deemed the originators of startling events. The savage does not speculate upon the nature of things unless he has an interest in doing so. Primitive people are not generally inquisitive as to causes. In matters not concerning the common wants of life the mind of the Brazilian Indian is a blank. When Mungo Park asked some negroes, what became of the sun during the night? they considered his question a very childish one; "they had never indulged a conjecture, nor formed any hypothesis, about the matter." I often found the Bedouins of Morocco extremely curious, but their curiosity consisted in the question, What? rather than in the question, Why?

While the belief in supernatural agents endowed with a will made the savage an animist, the idea that a mind presupposes a body, when thought out, led to anthropomorphism. Impossible as it is to imagine a will without a mind, it is hardly less impossible to imagine a mind without a body. The immaterial soul is an abstraction to which has been attributed a metaphysical reality, but of which no clear conception can be formed. As Hobbes observed, the opinion that spirits are incorporeal or immaterial "could never enter into the mind of any man by nature; because, though men may put together words . . . as *Spirit* and *Incorporeall*; yet they can never have the imagination of anything answering to them." Descartes himself frankly confessed: "What the soul itself was I either did not stay to consider, or, if I did, I imagined that it was something extremely rare and subtile, like wind, or flame, or ether, spread through my grosser parts." The supernatural agents were consequently of necessity considered to possess a more or less material constitution. And when a supernatural being comes more and more to occupy the thoughts of his worshippers and to stir their imagination, neither the ethereal or vaporous materiality of a departed human soul, nor the crude substantiality of an inanimate object, is at length considered a satisfactory body for such a being. He is humanized also with regard to his essential shape. Man created his gods in his own image and likeness, endowing them, not only with a mind, but also with a body very similar to his own.

But the anthropomorphic god is not the last creation of his imagination. The tendency to make gods more and

more perfect—of which I shall speak in another connection—gradually led to the notion that materiality is a quality which is not becoming to a god. Hence men endeavoured, to the best of their ability, to grasp the idea of a purely spiritual being, endowed with a mind but without a material body. Like Xenophanes in Greece, the Inca Yupangui in Peru protested against the prevailing anthropomorphism, declaring that purely spiritual service was befitting the almighty creator, not tributes or sacrifices. In the Bible we notice a successive transformation of the nature of the deity, from crude sensuousness to pure spirituality. According to the oldest traditions, Yahveh works and rests, he plants the garden of Eden, he walks in it in the cool of the day, and Adam and Eve hear his voice. In a great part of the Old Testament he is expressly bound by conditions of time and space. He is attached in an especial manner to the Jerusalem temple or some other shrine, and his favour is gained by definite modes of sacrifice. At the time of the Prophets the cruder anthropomorphisms of the earlier religion have been overcome; Yahveh is no longer seen in person, and by a prophet like Isaiah his residence in Zion is almost wholly dematerialized. Yet, as Robertson Smith observes, not even Isaiah has risen to the full height of the New Testament conception that God, who is spirit and who is to be worshipped spiritually, makes no distinction of spot with regard to worship, and is equally near to receive men's prayers in every place. Again, Moslem theologians take pains to point out that God, neither is begotten nor begets, and that he is without figure, form, colour, and parts. He hears all sounds, whether low or loud; but he hears without an ear. He sees all things, even the steps of a black ant on a black stone in a dark night; but he has no eyes, as men have. He speaks; but not with a tongue, as men do. He is endowed with knowledge, feelings, and a will. Thus the dematerialized god still retains a mental constitution modelled upon the human soul, with all its bodily desires and imperfections removed, with its higher qualities indefinitely increased, and, above all, endowed with a supernatural power of action.



## CHAPTER II

### The Character of the Gods of Uncivilized Peoples

IF the feeling of uncanniness and mystery is at the bottom of the belief in supernatural beings, it is obvious that goodness cannot be a general quality ascribed to them by primitive men. The old saying that religion was born of fear seems to hold true, in spite of recent assertions to the contrary. From all quarters of the savage world we hear that terror or fear is the predominant element in the religious sentiment, that people are more inclined to ascribe evil than good to the influence of supernatural beings, and that their sacrifices or other acts of worship more frequently have in view to avert misfortunes than to procure positive benefits. Of the gods of many uncivilized peoples we are directly told that they are of a malicious nature and mostly intent on doing harm to mankind.

Thus the Maori regarded their deities as the causes of pain, misery, and death, as mighty enemies from whom nobody ever thought of getting any aid or good, but who were to be rendered harmless by means of charms or spells or by sacrifices offered to appease their wrath. The Tahitians "supposed their gods were powerful spiritual beings, in some degree acquainted with the events of this world, and generally governing its affairs; never exercising anything like benevolence towards even their most devoted followers, but requiring homage and obedience, with constant offerings; denouncing their anger, and dispensing destruction on all who either refused or hesitated to comply." The Fijians "formed no idea of any voluntary kindness on the part of their gods, except the planting of wild yams, and the wrecking of strange canoes and foreign vessels on their coast"; and that some of these beings were conceived as positively wicked is indicated by the names given them—"the adulterer," "the rioter," "the

murderer," and so forth. The people of Aneiteum, in the New Hebrides, maintained that "earth and air and ocean were filled with natmasses, spiritual beings, but all malignant, who ruled over everything that affected the human race."

The Santal of India believes in no god from whose benignity he may expect favour, but in "a multitude of demons and evil spirits, whose spite he endeavours by supplications to avert." Even his family god "represents the secret principle of evil, which no bolts can shut out, and which dwells in unseen but eternally malignant presence beside every hearth." The Kamchadal do not seem to have hoped for anything good from their deities; Kutka himself, the creator of the universe and the greatest of the gods, was once caught in adultery and castrated.

According to the beliefs of the Koksoagmiut—Eskimo living in the Ungava district of Labrador—all the minor spirits are under the control of the great spirit whose name is Tung ak, and this being "is nothing more or less than death, which ever seeks to torment and harass the lives of people that their spirits may go to dwell with him." Nay, even the special guardian spirit by which each person is supposed to be attended is malignant in character and ever ready to seize upon the least occasion to work harm upon the individual whom it accompanies; its good offices can be obtained by propitiation only. Of various Brazilian tribes we are told that they do not believe in the existence of any benevolent spirits. The Coroados of Rio Xipotó acknowledge only an evil principle, which sometimes meets them in the form of a lizard or a crocodile or an ounce or a man with the feet of a stag, sometimes transforms itself into a swamp, and leads them astray, vexes them, brings them into difficulty and danger, and even kills them. The Mundrucûs of the Cupari have no notion of a good supreme being, but believe in an evil spirit, regarded merely as a kind of hobgoblin, who is at the bottom of all their little failures and gives them troubles in fishing, hunting, and so forth.

Of many African peoples we likewise hear that supernatural beings are supposed to exercise a potent influence for evil rather than for good, or that beneficent spirits are almost unknown. All the good the Bechuanas enjoy they ascribe to rain-makers, but "all the evil that comes they attribute

to a supernatural being "; of their principal god, Morimo, Mr. Moffat never once, in the course of twenty-five years spent in missionary labour, heard that he did good or was capable of doing so. On the Gold Coast, according to Major Ellis, the majority of spirits are malignant, and every misfortune is ascribed to their action. "I believe," he adds, "that originally all were conceived as malignant, and that the indifference, or the beneficence (when propitiated by sacrifice and flattery), which are now believed to be characteristics of some of these beings, are later modifications of the original idea."

Of many of the simpler peoples it is reported that they have notions of good as well as of evil spirits, but that they chiefly or exclusively worship the evil ones, since the others are supposed to be so good that they require no offerings or homage. But adoration of supernatural beings who are considered at least occasionally beneficent is also very prevalent among uncivilized peoples. We may suppose that even at an early stage of culture man was sometimes impressed by a fortunate event which he ascribed to the influence of a friendly spirit, and that he was anxious to keep on amicable terms with the benefactor. The pagans of Siberia accompanied their sacrifices with works like these: "Behold what I bring you to eat; bring me then in return children, cattle, and a long life." The Point Barrow Eskimo, when he arrives at a river, throws into the air a small piece of tobacco, crying out: "Spirits, spirits, I give you tobacco, give me plenty of fish." Of the Sia Indians (Pueblos) Mrs. Stevenson writes that their religion is not mainly one of propitiation, but rather of supplication for favours and payment for the same—they "do the will of and thereby please the beings to whom they pray." We even hear of savages making thank-offerings to their gods; although we have reason to suspect that in such cases the gratitude of the sacrificer commonly is of the kind which La Rochefoucauld defined as "a secret desire to receive greater benefits in the future." It should also be noticed that the belief in guardian or tutelary spirits of tribes, clans, villages, families, or individuals is extremely widespread. These spirits may be exacting enough—they are often greatly feared by their own worshippers, and sometimes described as distinctly malignant by nature; but their general function is nevertheless to afford assistance to the

person or persons with whom they are associated. At the same time we have to remember that the goodness of many savage gods only consists in their readiness to help those who please them by offerings or adoration.

It seems that most gods of uncivilized peoples are thoroughly selfish beings who care about nothing else than what concerns their own personal interests—that they are utterly indifferent to men's behaviour towards their fellow-men, neither disapproving of vice or punishing the wicked, nor approving of virtue or rewarding the good. That this is the case with gods who are of a malicious nature and mostly intent on doing harm to mankind is a corollary of the fact that the altruistic sentiment is the chief source of moral emotions; but even a friendly supernatural being is by no means *eo ipso* a guardian of men's conduct towards one another. We are directly told by competent observers that the supernatural beings of savage belief frequently show the utmost disregard to all questions of worldly morality.

According to Spencer and Gillen, the Central Australian natives, though they assume the existence of both friendly and mischievous spirits, "have not the vaguest idea of a personal individual other than an actual living member of the tribe who approves or disapproves of their conduct, so far as anything like what we call morality is concerned." The Society Islanders maintained that "the only crimes that were visited by the displeasure of their deities were the neglect of some rite or ceremony." The religious beliefs of the Gonds, a Dravidian tribe of Central India, are said to be wholly unconnected with any idea of morality, a deity demanding righteous conduct from his creatures being a religious idea far beyond the capacity of the Indian savage. Of the Ewhe-, Yoruba-, and Tshi-speaking peoples of the West African Slave and Gold Coasts, Major Ellis writes: "Religion, at the stage of growth in which we find it among these three groups of tribes, has no connection with morals, or the relations of men to one another. It consists solely of ceremonial worship, and the gods are only offended when some rite or ceremony has been neglected or omitted. . . . Murder, theft, and all offences against the person or against property are matters in which the gods have no immediate concern, and in which they take no interest, except in the case when, bribed by a valuable offering, they

take up the quarrel in the interests of some faithful worshipper." So also among the Bambala, a Bantu tribe in the Kasai, south of the River Congo, "there is no belief that the gods or spirits punish wrongdoing by afflicting the criminal or his family, nor are the acts of a man supposed to affect his condition after death." The Indians of Guiana, according to Sir Everard Im Thurn, observe an admirable code of morality, which exists side by side with a simple animistic form of religion, but the two have absolutely no connection with one another. With reference to the Tarahumare of Mexico, Dr. Lumholtz states that the only wrong towards the gods of which an Indian may consider himself guilty is that he does not dance enough. "For this offence he asks pardon. Whatever bad thoughts or actions toward man he may have on his conscience are settled between himself and the person offended." "In the primitive Indian's conception of a god," Mr. Parkman observes, "the idea of moral good has no part. His deity does not dispense justice for this world or the next."

On the other hand, there are also instances in which savage gods are said to punish the transgression of rules relating to worldly morality. Occasionally, as will be shown later, on, such gods are represented as avengers of some special kind of wrongdoing—murder, theft, lack of hospitality, or lying. Of certain negro tribes, "when a man is about to commit a crime, or do that which his conscience tells him he ought not to do, he lays aside his fetish, and covers up his deity, that he may not be privy to the deed." The Ainu of Japan are heard to say: "We could not go contrary to the customs of our ancestors without bringing down upon us the wrath of the gods." And of various savages we are told that they believe in the existence of a supreme being who is a moral lawgiver or judge.

In Australia, especially in New South Wales and Victoria, but also in other parts of the continent, many of the native tribes have the notion of an "All-father," called by one name or another. He is represented as an anthropomorphic supernatural being and as the father of the race or the maker of everything, who at one time dwelt on the earth but afterwards ascended to a land beyond the sky, where he still remains. He is of a kindly disposition and requires no worship; in a very few cases only we meet with some

faint traces of a cult offered him. He is frequently believed to have instituted the initiation rites, and to have given the people their laws. And in several instances he is represented as a guardian of morality who punishes the wicked and rewards the good, either in this world or, more frequently, after death. It seems probable that these views contain a mixture of Christian ideas and genuine aboriginal beliefs. There is reason to suppose that the Australian notion of an "All-father" is not in the first instance due to missionary influence; we have records of it from a comparatively early date, it is spread over a wide area, it has been found among natives who live in a state of great isolation, and the multitude of different names by which the "All-father" is called in different tribes does not suggest a recent origin from a common source. He may very well be a mythical ancestor; Howitt observes that the master in the sky-country represents the Australian idea of a headman. He may also be a personification of supernatural force in general, or a being who has been invented to account for all kinds of marvellous phenomena. The word *altjira*, by which the Arunta call their great god, is apparently not a proper name—according to Kempe, it is applied to five gods, whose names he gives, as also to the sun, moon, and remarkable things generally; and Mulkari, who figures in the beliefs of some Queensland tribes, is described not only as "a benevolent, omnipresent, supernatural being," but as "anything incomprehensible," as the supernatural power that makes everything which the blacks cannot otherwise account for. On the other hand, it is hardly possible to doubt that in various instances Christian conceptions have been infused into the aboriginal belief either by the natives themselves or by our informants. Biblical traits are conspicuous in some of the legends, and the doctrine of a hell with everlasting fire has almost certainly a foreign origin. In some other points the genuineness of the Australian theories of retribution is at least open to doubt, even though the function of a judge cannot be regarded as altogether incompatible with the notion of a mythical headman in the sky. Spencer and Gillen observe that it would be a very easy matter indeed to form, as the result of a general statement such as might be made by any individual native in reply to a question, a perfectly wrong impression with regard to the native's idea as to the exis-

tence of a supreme being inculcating moral rules. Of the Central Australian aborigines they say: "Any such idea as that of a future life of happiness or the reverse, as a reward for meritorious or as a punishment for blameworthy conduct, is quite foreign to them. . . . We know of no tribe in which there is a belief of any kind in a supreme being who rewards or punishes the individual according to his moral behaviour, using the word 'moral' in the native sense." So far as the Arunta are concerned, this statement is confirmed by Strehlow. He writes that their god Altjira, who lives in the sky and shows himself to man in the lightning, is a good god who never inflicts any punishments on human beings.

The Sea Dyaks of Borneo have a great good god called Batara, or Petara, who created the world and rules over it, and is the cause of every blessing. He is not susceptible to human influence, and therefore receives no worship. But he approves of virtue and punishes vice. Like many other great gods of savages, he is lacking in individuality; indeed, the general belief is nowadays that he is not one supreme god, but that there are many Petaras, in fact as many as there are men. Each man, the people say, has his own peculiar Petara, his own tutelary deity, and if a person is miserable it is because his Petara is miserable. This account, however, loses much of its interest when we find that the name Batara or Petara has obviously been borrowed from Sanscrit, where the word *bhāṭāra* means "lord" or "master." The great gods of some other peoples in the Malay Archipelago, again, have names which are derived from Arabic—Lahatala, Latala, or Hatalla, from *Allāh ta'āla*. Hence when the Alfura of Bura are heard to say that their highest god, Opo-geba-snulat or Lahatala, writes down in a book the actions of men so as to be able to reward the virtuous and punish the wicked as they deserve, we inevitably think of Muhammadan influence. Lack of detailed information makes it impossible to decide whether the belief in a creator and heavenly judge which has been found among some uncivilized tribes in India has been derived from the Hindus. Of the pagan Samoyed we are told that they regard the great Num as the creator of the universe, as an all-powerful and omniscient being, who protects the innocent, rewards the virtuous, and punishes the wicked. But the primitive Num, who was simply the

sky, was too far removed from the nomads who wandered across the frozen Siberian plain to interfere to prevent catastrophe or accomplish their well-being; and in the provident actions and overseeing which some of the Samoyed now ascribe to him "we can clearly enough trace the influence of the missionary and the suggestion of the Christian faith."

Dr. Rink asserts that the Greenlanders considered Tornarsuk as the supreme being on whom they were dependent for any supernatural aid, and in whose abodes in the depth of the earth all such persons as had striven and suffered for the benefit of their fellow-men should find a happy existence after death. Dr. Nansen, however, is of opinion that Tornarsuk owes a great deal to missionary teaching. That he was not so superior a being as is commonly stated is evident from Captain Holm's description of the Angmag-salik in Eastern Greenland, where he is represented as a monster living in the sea, of about the same length as a big seal, but thicker. And to judge from Egede's description, dating from the earlier part of the eighteenth century, Tornarsuk's notions of justice, if he had any, must in olden times have been very limited, as he took to his subterranean paradise only women who died in labour and men who perished at sea.

The "Great Spirit" so often referred to in accounts of North American Indians is described as a being too elevated and remote to take much interest in the destinies and actions of men, and too benevolent by nature to require propitiation or worship. Schoolcraft asserts that in their oral traditions there is no attempt "to make man accountable to him, here or hereafter, for aberrations from virtue, goodwill, truth, or any form of moral right." Yet there are instances in which he is represented in a different light. The most essential moral precepts of the Iroquois "were taught as the will of the Great Spirit, and obedience to their requirements as acceptable in his sight"; but, while highly gratified with their virtues, he detested their vices, and punished them for their bad conduct not only in this world but in a future state of existence. And of Ti-ra'-wa, the supreme being of the Pawnee in Nebraska, we are told that he applauds valour, abhors theft, and punishes the wicked by annihilation, while the good dwell with him in his heavenly home. As regards the origin of the North Ameri-



can notion of the Great Spirit different opinions have been expressed. On the one hand we are told that it is essentially only "the Indian's conception of the white man's god," which belongs not to the untutored but to the tutored mind of the savage. On the other hand it is argued that the belief in the Great Spirit must be a native product, since it is reported to have occurred even before the arrival of the earliest Jesuit missionaries. Unfortunately, however, we cannot be sure that our informants have accurately interpreted the beliefs of the Indians. Mr. Dorsey has pointed out that a fruitful source of error has been a misunderstanding of their terms and phrases. The Dakota word *wakanda*, which has been rendered into "Great Spirit," simply means "mystery," or "mysterious," and signifies rather a quality than a definite entity. Among many tribes the sun is *wakanda*, among the same tribes the moon is *wakanda*, and so are thunder, lightning, the stars, the winds, as also various animals, trees, and inanimate objects or places of a striking character; even a man, especially a medicine-man, may be considered *wakanda*. Mr. Dorsey also observes that in many cases Indians have been quick to adopt the phrases of civilization in communicating with white people, whilst in speaking to one another they use their own terms. At the same time it seems that, if the notion of a Great Spirit had altogether a Christian origin, we might expect to find an idea of moral retribution more commonly associated with it than the statements imply. It may be that among the North American Indians, also, as among some other peoples, a vague conception of something like a supreme being has arisen through a personification of the mysteries in nature.<sup>1</sup> But if this be the case, the interest which the Great Spirit in rare instances takes in human conduct may all the same be due to missionary influence. It is certainly not an original characteristic of his nature. Among the Iroquois and Pawnee, who attribute to their great god the function of a moral judge, he also receives offerings—a circumstance which indicates that he cannot be regarded as a typical representative of his class.

<sup>1</sup> The Great Spirit is represented by Schoolcraft as a "Soul of the Universe which inhabits and animates everything," and is supposed to exist under every possible form in the world, animate and inanimate. Of Ti-ra'-wa it is said that he "is in and of every thing."

In South America, too, several tribes have been found to believe in a benevolent Great Spirit, who is indifferent to men's behaviour and is not worshipped by them. Of the Passés on the River Japura, however, we are told by a Portuguese official who travelled in Brazil in 1774-5 that they have the idea of a creator who rewards good people by allowing their souls to stay with him and punishes the wicked by turning their souls into evil spirits; but according to a later traveller these notions are so far in advance of the ideas of all other tribes of Indians that "we must suppose them to have been derived by the docile Passés from some early missionary or traveller." Of the Fuegians, again, Admiral Fitzroy writes: "A great black man is supposed to be always wandering about the woods and mountains, who is certain of knowing every word and every action; who cannot be escaped, and who influences the weather according to men's conduct." Of this influence our informant gives the following instance. A native related a story of his brother who once killed a man—one of those very wild men who wander about in the woods supporting themselves by theft—because he stole from him a bird. Afterwards he was very sorry for what he had done, particularly when it began to blow hard. In telling the story, the brother said: "Rain come down—snow come down—hail come down—wind blow—blow—very much blow. Very bad to kill man. Big man in woods no like it, he very angry." The same native also reproached the surgeon of the *Beagle* for shooting some young ducks with the old bird: "Very bad to shoot little duck—come wind—come rain—blow—very much blow." In the latter case, however, no mention was made of the black man in the woods. From Admiral Fitzroy's account Mr. Andrew Lang draws the conclusion that the Fuegians have evolved the idea of a high deity, an ethical judge, who "makes for righteousness," who searches the heart, who almost literally "marks the sparrow's fall," and whose morality is so much above the ordinary savage standard that he regards the slaying of a stranger and an enemy, caught red-handed in robbery, as a sin. This statement may serve as a specimen of the spirit in which its author deals with the subject of supreme beings in savage beliefs. There is after all some difference between a high moral god and a mythical weather doctor who lives in the woods and sends bad weather if a wild

man, who also lives in the woods, is killed. Mr. Thomas Bridges, our most trustworthy authority on the Fuegians, says nothing of the black man, but states that nearly all the old men among the Fuegians are medicine-men, and that these wizards make frequent incantations in which they seem to address themselves to a mysterious being called Aiapakal. And they also believe in another spirit, named Hoakils, from whom they pretend to obtain a supernatural power over life and death.

Among the pagans of Africa there is a very widespread belief in a benevolent supreme deity, a creator or maker of things, who lives in or above the sky, who generally takes no concern whatever in the affairs of mankind, who mostly receives no worship, and who is, as a rule, totally indifferent to good or evil, although in some instances he is described as a judge of human conduct. It is, of course, impossible to say exactly how far the statements referring to African supreme beings represent unadulterated native beliefs. In criticizing Kolbe's account of the supreme and perfect god of the Hottentots, Bishop Callaway observes: "Nothing is more easy than to enquire of heathen savages the character of their creed, and during the conversation to impart to them . . . ideas which they never heard before, and presently to have these come back again as articles of their own original faith, when in reality they are but the echoes of one's own thoughts." With reference to the West African native, Miss Kingsley likewise remarks that he has a wonderful power of assimilating foreign forms of belief, and that when he once has got hold of a new idea it remains in his mind long after the missionaries who put it there have passed away. And besides the teaching of missionaries there are in Africa several factors which for centuries have tended to introduce foreign conceptions—namely, intercourse with European settlers, the operations of the slave trade, and the influence of Muhammadanism. But at the same time it seems exceedingly probable that the African belief in a supreme being has a native substratum. In many cases he is apparently the heaven god; but he may also be a mythical ancestor, as the Hottentot god Tsui-goab and the Zulu god Unkulunkulu; or a personification of the supernatural, as is suggested by such names as the Masai Ngai, the Monbuttu Kilima, and the Malagasy Andriamanitra; or the assumed cause of anything which

particularly fills the savage mind with wonder or awe. Among the natives of Northern Guinea, according to Leighton Wilson, "everything which transpires in the natural world beyond the power of man, or of spirits, who are supposed to occupy a place somewhat higher than man, is at once and spontaneously ascribed to the agency of God." Nay, for reasons which will be stated presently, I am even of opinion that the function of a moral judge, occasionally attributed to the great god of African pagans, has in some instances an independent origin.

Generally speaking, then, it seems that the All-father, supreme being, or high god of savage belief may be traced to several different sources. When not a "loan-god" of foreign extraction, he may be a mythical ancestor or headman; or a deification of the sky or some large and remote object of nature, like the sun; or a personification or personified cause of the mysteries or forces of nature. Andrew Lang's argument, that the belief in such a being is "irreducible" because it prevails among savages who worship neither ancestors nor nature, can carry no weight in consideration of the fact that the great god himself, as a rule, is no object of worship. In various instances we have reason to suppose that, even though the notion of a supreme being is fundamentally of native origin, foreign conceptions have been engrafted upon it; and to these belongs in particular the idea of a heavenly judge who in the after-life punishes the wicked and rewards the good. But we are not entitled to assume that the idea of moral retribution as a function of the great god has in every case been adopted from people of a higher culture. A mythical ancestor or headman may of his own accord approve of virtue and disapprove of vice. Moreover, as we shall see, justice readily becomes the attribute of a god who is habitually appealed to in curses, oaths, or ordeals; and that the supreme being of savages, notably African savages, is thus invoked, is in some cases directly stated by our authorities. It has often been said that the oath and ordeal involve a belief in gods as vindicators of truth and justice, that they are "appeals to the moral nature of the Divinity." If this were true, moral retribution would certainly be an exceedingly frequent function of savage gods. But the efficacy ascribed to an oath is largely, and in many cases exclusively, of a magical character, and if it contains an appeal to a god

he is, according to primitive notions, a mere tool in the hand of the person invoking him. So also the ordeal is essentially a magical rite. Frequently, at least, it contains a curse or an oath which has reference to the guilt or innocence of a suspected person, and the proper object of the ordeal is then to give reality to the imprecation for the purpose of establishing the validity or invalidity of the suspicion. And even though all ordeals have not the same foundation, it seems highly improbable that any people, in the first instance, resorted to this method of discovering innocence or guilt from a belief in a god who is by his nature a guardian of truth and justice.

Nor must we make any inference as to the moral character of gods from the mere prevalence of a belief in a future world, where men are in some way or other punished or rewarded for their conduct during their life. Such a belief is said to be fairly common among uncivilized races; and although in several cases it is undoubtedly due to Christian or other foreign influence, we are not entitled to assume that it is so in all. It seems that the savage mind may by itself in various ways come to the idea of some kind of moral retribution after death.

First, the condition of the dead man is often supposed to depend upon the attentions bestowed on him by the survivors. Speaking of the Efatese of the New Hebrides, Mr. D. Macdonald observes: "A man's condition in the future would be, to some extent, happy or miserable according to his life here. Supposing he were a worthless fellow, very scanty worship would be rendered to him at his death and few animals slain to accompany him to the spirit world; and thus he would occupy an inferior position there corresponding to his social worthlessness here." This belief, our informant adds, "has undoubtedly great influence in making men strive to live so as to obtain the good opinion of their fellows, and leave an honourable memory behind them at death." The Bushmans, who maintain that the dead will ultimately go to a land abounding in excellent food, put a spear by the side of a departed friend in order that, when he arises, he may have something to defend himself with and procure a living; but if they hate a person, they deposit no spear, so that on his resurrection he may either be murdered or starved. The dead may also have to suffer from the curses of those whom they injured

while alive. At Motlav, in the Banks' Islands, relatives "watch the grave of a man whose life was bad, lest some man wronged by him should come at night and beat with a stone upon the grave, cursing him." The Maori were careful to prevent the bones of their dead relatives from falling into the hands of their enemies, "who would dreadfully desecrate and ill-use them, with many bitter jeers and curses." A person may, moreover, himself during his lifetime directly provide for his comfort in the life to come, and if the act by which he does so is apt to call forth approval its result is easily interpreted as its reward. Thus the Kukis of Assam believe that all enemies whom a person has killed will in his future abode be in attendance on him as slaves; and this belief probably accounts for their opinion that nothing more certainly ensures future happiness than destroying a number of enemies.

We have further to notice the common idea that a person's character after his death remains more or less as it was during his life. Hence the souls of bad people are supposed to reappear in the shape of obnoxious animals or become evil spirits, and this may lead to the notion that they have to do so as a punishment for their wickedness. And as the revengeful feelings of men likewise are believed to last beyond death, offenders may in the other world have to suffer from the hands of those whom they hurt in this. Some of the Nagas of Assam maintain that "a murdered man's soul receives that of his murderer in the spirit world and makes him his slave." The Chippewa Indians think that in the land of the dead "the souls of bad men are haunted by the phantoms of the persons or things they have injured." In Aurora, one of the New Hebrides, the belief prevails that the ghosts of those whom a man has wronged in this world take a full revenge upon him after death. According to the Banks' Islanders, if a person has killed a good man without cause, the good man's ghost withstands his murderer, when the latter after death wants to enter into Panoi, the good place; but if one man has killed another in fair fight he will not be withstood by the person whom he slew. And not only the offended party but the other dead as well may, from dislike or fear, be anxious to refuse the souls of bad people admittance to their company. In the belief of the Pentecost Islanders, when the soul of a murdered man comes to the land of ghosts

with the instrument of death upon him, he tells who killed him, and when the murderer arrives the ghostly people will not receive him, but he has to stay apart with other murderers. The Iroquois allot separate villages even to the souls of those who have died in war and of those who have committed suicide, because the other dead are afraid of their presence. Among the negroes of Northern Guinea described by Leighton Wilson, "the only idea of a future state of retribution is implied in the use of a separate burial-place for those who have died 'by the red-water ordeal' or who have been guilty of grossly wicked deeds"; and if a person's body is buried apart, his soul will naturally remain equally isolated. That the frequent idea of the bad being separated from the good after death is largely due to the assumed unwillingness of the latter to associate with dangerous or disreputable souls seems probable from the fact that, in the beliefs of the lower races, paradise generally plays a much more prominent part than hell, the lot of the wicked being to suffer want rather than to be subjected to torments. But, finally, it must also be remembered that the other world is a creation of men's fancy, and may therefore be formed in accordance with their hopes and wishes. Beyond the gloom of death they may imagine a paradise where life is much happier than here on earth. Why, then, might not, even among savages, their moral feelings, only too often ungratified in the reality of the present, occasionally seek satisfaction in the dreams of the future?

The belief in a moral retribution after death may thus originate in various ways, quite independently of any notion of a god who acts as a judge of human conduct. When such a belief is said to prevail among a savage people it is by no means the rule that the rewards or punishments are associated with the activity of the divine being. And when, as is sometimes the case, the fate of the dead is supposed to depend upon the will of a high god, the notions held about the other world, and especially about the place reserved for the wicked, in several instances suggest influence from a more advanced religion. But, on the other hand, it is not an idea which seems incompatible with genuine savage thought that, in cases where the souls of men are believed to go to live with gods, the latter select their companions and, like the human inhabitants of the other world, refuse admittance to undesirable individuals.

Religion has no doubt already at the savage stage begun to influence moral ideas even in points which have no direct bearing upon the personal interests of gods; but this influence is not known to have been nearly so great as it has often been represented to be, and it seems to me to be a fact not to be doubted that the moral consciousness has originated in emotions entirely different from that feeling of uncanniness and mystery which first led to the belief in supernatural beings. I can find no foundation whatever for the statements made by various writers, that "the historical beginning of all morality is to be found in religion" (Pfleiderer); that even in the earliest period of human history "religion and morality are necessary correlates of each other" (Caird); that "all moral commandments originally have the character of religious commandments" (Wundt); that in ancient society "all morality—as morality was then understood—was consecrated and enforced by religious motives and sanctions" (Robertson Smith); that the clan-god was the guardian of the tribal morality (Jevons). From various facts, some of which will be stated below, I have even been led to the conclusion that early moral ideas relating to men's conduct towards one another have been more influenced by the belief in magical forces which may be utilized by man than by the belief in the free activity of gods.



### CHAPTER III

## The Character of the Gods of Civilized Peoples

FROM the gods of savage races we shall now pass to consider the character of more civilized gods.

The great gods of ancient Egypt were mostly conceived as friendly beings. Amon Râ, "the king of the gods," was, in his character of the sun god, the creator, preserver, and supporter of all living things. He it is who makes pasture for the herds and fruit trees for men; on his account the Nile comes and mankind lives. He is verily of kindly heart: "when men call to him he delivers the fearful from the insolent." He is "the vizier of the poor, who takes no bribes," and who does not corrupt witnesses; and to him officials pray for promotion. Thoth, the moon god, was also the god of all wisdom and learning, who gave men "speech and writing," who discovered the written characters, and by his arithmetic enabled gods and men to keep account of their possessions. Osiris ruled over the whole of Egypt as king, and instructed its inhabitants in all that was good—in agriculture as well as in the true religion—and gave them laws. After a long and blessed reign, however, he fell a prey to the machinations of his brother Set and, having been slain, was constrained to descend into the Under-world, where he evermore lived and reigned as judge and king of the dead. But the wicked god Set was also an object of worship; for he was strong and mighty, a terror to gods and men, and kings were anxious to secure his favour.

Amon Râ was invoked as "Lord of Truth." Thoth was called to witness by him who wished to give assurance of his honesty and good faith, and was styled "the judge in heaven." His wife Maâ, or Maat, was the goddess of both truth and justice, and her priests were the supreme judges. But it seems that the Egyptian gods after all

chiefly took notice of such acts as concerned their own well-being. This is true even of Osiris, "the great god, the lord of justice," in whose presence the judgment of the dead was given which decided upon their admission into his kingdom. In thousands upon thousands of funerary inscriptions we read words like these: "May a royal offering be given to Osiris, that he may grant all manner of good things, food and drink to the soul of the deceased." In the "Negative Confession," which the worshippers of Osiris taught to their dead, great importance was attached to religious offences, such as to snare the birds of the gods, to catch the fish in their lakes, to injure the herds in the temple domains, to diminish the food in the temples, to revile the god. At the same time the list of offences which excluded the dead from Osiris' kingdom also contained very many of a social character—murder, oppression, stealing, robbing minors, fraud, lying, slander, reviling, adultery. But the meaning of this seems to have been, not so much that the god was animated by a righteous desire to punish the wicked and reward the good, as rather that he did not like to have any rascals among his vassals. As to the fate of the non-justified dead very little is said, and the punishment devised for them seems to have been a comparatively modern invention. Nay, the virtuous dead themselves depended for their welfare upon their knowledge of magical words and formulas, upon amulets laid in their tombs, and upon the offerings made to them by their kindred. Ignorant souls, or those ill prepared for the struggle, were overcome by hunger and thirst, were attacked by demons and poisonous animals in traversing the regions of the Under-world, and, when in Osiris' kingdom, had to work and till the land and earn their own living if the offerings ceased. The *Book of the Dead* is itself essentially a collection of spells intended to secure to the dead victory over evil demons and protection from the gods; and the "Negative Confession" is a later addition, which indicates that originally the conduct of earthly life was not considered at all.

The religion of the Chaldeans was a religion of dread. Everywhere they felt themselves surrounded by hostile demons; feared above all were the seven evil spirits, who were everywhere and yet invisible, who slipped through bolts and doorposts and sockets, and who had power

even to bewitch the gods. In their incessant warfare against these fiends men were assisted by the more propitious among the deities: by Marduk, the "merciful" god, the god of the youthful sun of spring and early morning; by Ea, the "good" god, the god of the waters of the deep and the source of wisdom; by Gibil-Nusku, the lord of fire, who put to flight the demons of night when the fire was kindled on the household hearth, and who in the flame carried to the other gods the sacrifices offered them; as also by the tutelary deities of each individual, household, and city. The gods were on the whole favourably disposed towards man. But they helped only those who piously observed the prescribed rites, who recited the conventional prayers and offered them sacrifices; on such persons they bestowed a happy old age and a numerous posterity. On the other hand, he who did not fear his god would be cut down like a reed; and by neglecting the slightest ceremonial detail the king excited the anger of the deities against himself and his subjects. During the whole of their lives the Chaldeans were haunted by the dread of offending their gods, and they continually implored pardon for their sins. But the sinner became conscious of his guilt only as a conclusion drawn from the fact that he was suffering from some misfortune, which he interpreted as a punishment sent by an offended god. It mattered little what had called forth the wrath of the god, or whether the deity was acting in accordance with just ideas; and in none of the penitential psalms known to us is there any indication that the notion of sin comprised offences against fellow-men.

It is true that in the incantation series "Shurpu" not only offences against gods and ceremonial transgressions, but a large number of wrongs of a social character, are included in the list of possible causes of the suffering which the incantation is intended to remove. On behalf of the afflicted individual the exorciser asks: "Has he sinned against a god, Is his guilt against a goddess, Is it a wrongful deed against his master, Hatred towards his elder brother, Has he despised father or mother, Insulted his elder sister, Has he given too little (in mercantile transactions), Has he withheld too much, For 'no' said 'yes,' for 'yes' said 'no'? . . . Has he fixed a false boundary, Not fixed a just boundary, Has he removed a

boundary, a limit, or a territory, Has he possessed himself of his neighbour's house, Has he approached his neighbour's wife, Has he shed the blood of his neighbour, Robbed his neighbour's dress? "and so forth. But I fail to see any sufficient ground for the conclusion which Schrader and Zimmern have drawn from these passages—to wit, that the gods were believed to be angry with persons guilty of any of the offences enumerated. It seems to me quite obvious that the evils which were hypothetically associated with injuries inflicted upon fellow-men were ascribed, not to the avenging activity of a god, but to the curses of the injured party. The gods are expressly invoked to relieve the unhappy individual from the curses under which he is suffering, whether he has been cursed by his father, mother, elder brother, elder sister, friend, master, king, or god, or has approached an accursed person, or slept in such a person's bed, or sat on his chair, or eaten from his dish, or drunk from his cup. In these incantations there is no plea for forgiveness; the possible causes for the suffering are enumerated simply because the mention of the real cause is supposed to go a long way towards expelling the evil.

Some of the gods, however, are invoked as judges. This is frequently the case with Shamash, the sun god, "the supreme judge of heaven and earth," who, seated on a throne in the chamber of judgment, receives the supplications of men. Of the moon god Sin it is said in a hymn dedicated to him that his "word produces truth and justice, so that men speak the truth." Anû the lord of fire is addressed as a judge, who burns the evil-doers and annihilates the bad, and is exhorted by the conjurer to help him to his right; but this probably means little more than the invocation, "Eat my enemies, destroy those who have done harm to me." Of a moral retribution after death there is no trace in the Chaldean religion. Those who have obtained the goodwill of the gods receive their reward in this world, by a life of happiness and of good health, but the moment that death ensues the control of the gods comes to an end. All mankind, kings and subjects, virtuous and wicked, go to Aralû, the gloomy subterranean realm presided over by Allatu and her consort Nergal, where the dead are doomed to everlasting sojourn or imprisonment in a state of joyless inactivity.

A kind of judgment is spoken of, but nothing indicates that it is based on moral considerations. According to the Gilgamesh epic the fortunes awaiting those who die are not all alike. Those who fall in battle seem to enjoy special privileges, provided that they are properly buried and there is some one to make them comfortable in their last hour and to look after them when dead. But he whose corpse remains in the field has no rest in the earth, and he whose spirit is not cared for by any one is consumed by gnawing hunger.

In a still higher degree than the Chaldean religion Zoroastrianism represents an incessant struggle against evil spirits. Here everything in heaven and on earth is engaged in the conflict; it is a war between two mighty sovereigns, Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu, and their respective forces. Whatever works for the good of man comes from and strives for Ahura Mazda, whatever works for the harm of man comes from and strives for Angra Mainyu. There can be no doubt that the powers of goodness will absolutely triumph in the end; but, though Angra Mainyu and his band have been defeated, the battle is still raging. Ahura Mazda, being the originator of everything good in the world, is also the founder of the order of universe, "the creator of the righteous order." In the Vendidad he is asked about the rules of life, and he is pleased to answer; M. Darmesteter observes that the Avesta and the Penta-teuch are the only two religious books known in which legislation descends from the heavens to the earth in a series of conversations between the lawgiver and his god. The sacred law of Zoroastrianism enjoins charity and industry, it condemns the murder of a believer, abortion, theft, non-payment of debts, and, with special emphasis, falsehood and breach of faith, and unnatural intercourse.<sup>1</sup> But the "good thoughts, words, and deeds" most urgently insisted upon are orthodoxy, prayer, and sacrifice; while the greatest sins are apostasy, transgressions of the rules of ceremonial cleanliness, and offences against sacred

<sup>1</sup> The excessive sinfulness attached to homosexual intercourse by Zoroastrianism was due to the fact that it was associated with the gravest of all sins, unbelief. There was a similar reason for the extreme abhorrence in which it was held by Hebrewism and Christianity. See my book, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, ii. 486 sqq.

beings. It is less criminal to kill a man than to serve bad food to a shepherd's dog; for the manslayer gets off with ninety stripes, whereas the bad master will receive two hundred. And the killing of a water dog is punished with ten thousand stripes. Offenders will be liable to penalties not only here below, but in the next world as well, where Ahura Mazda, "the discerning arbiter," establishes "evil for the evil, and happy blessings for the good." But the fate of the dead is not merely influenced by their conduct towards their fellow-men while alive. It is said that "he who wishes to seize the heavenly reward will seize it by giving gifts to him who holds up the Law." And the soul of him who recites the prayer Ahuna Vairya in the manner prescribed crosses over the bridge which separates this world from the next, and reaches the highest paradise.

In Vedic religion we likewise meet with a conflict between gods and demons, but the struggle is too unequal to result in anything like the Zoroastrian dualism. Various misfortunes are attributed to the ill-will of evil spirits, but their power is comparatively slight, and the greater demons, like Vṛtra, are represented as defeated or destroyed by the gods. Yet there is among the great gods themselves one who has a distinctly malevolent character—namely, Rudra, a god of storm, "terrible like a wild beast"; but, though the hymns addressed to him chiefly express fear of his dreadful shafts and deprecations of his wrath, he is also sometimes supplicated to confer blessings upon man and beast. With this exception the great gods are all beneficent beings, though of course liable to punish those who offend them. Varuna has established heaven and earth, has made the celestial bodies to shine and the rivers to flow. He rules over nature by laws which are fixed and immutable, and which must be followed by the gods themselves. He sees and knows everything, because he is infinite light and the sun is his eye; and in connection with Mithra he is said to dispel and punish falsehood. Varuna has even been represented as "the supreme moral ruler," but it seems to me that scholars have generally credited him with a somewhat more comprehensive sense of justice than the hymns imply. Every hymn to Varuna contains a prayer for forgiveness, but there is no indication that the sins which excite his wrath include ordinary wrongdoing.

That sin and moral guilt are not identical conceptions in the Rig-Veda is fairly obvious from the fact that forgiveness of sin is also sought from Indra, whose favour is only won by those who contribute to his well-being or who destroy persons neglectful of his worship. The Vedic religion is pre-eminently ritualistic. The pious man *par préférence* is he who makes the drink *soma* flow in abundance and whose hands are always full of butter, the reprobate man is he who is penurious towards the gods; and, just like the other gods, Varuna visits with disease those who neglect him and is appeased by sacrifices and prayers.

After death the souls of those who have practised rigorous penance, of those who have risked their lives in battle, and above all of those who have bestowed liberal sacrificial gifts, go with the smoke arising from the funeral pile to the heavenly world, where the Fathers dwell with Yama—the first man who died—and Varuna, the two kings who reign in bliss. There they enjoy an endless felicity among the gods, clothed in glorious bodies and drinking the celestial *soma*, which renders them immortal. Yet there are different degrees of happiness in this heavenly mansion. The performance of rites in honour of the manes causes the souls to ascend from a lower to a higher state; indeed, if no such offerings are made they do not go to heaven at all. Another source of happiness for the dead is their own pious conduct during their lifetime; for in the abode of bliss they are united with what they have sacrificed and given, especially reaping the reward of their gifts to priests. Unworthy souls, on the other hand, are kept out of this abode by Yama's dogs, which guard the road to his kingdom. As to the destiny in store for those who are not admitted to heaven, the hymns have little to tell. Zimmer and others erroneously argue that a race who believe in future rewards for the good must logically believe in future punishments for the wicked. So far as I can see, all the traces of such a belief which are to be found in the Vedic literature are requests made to gods, or simply curses, to the effect that evil-doers may be thrown into deep and dismal pits under the earth. They do not imply that gods of their own accord punish wicked people after death.

In post-Vedic times ritualism grew more important still. Sometimes the gods are represented as beings indifferent

to every moral distinction, and the most indelicate stories are unscrupulously related of them. In the Taittiriya Samhitâ of the Yajur Veda we are told that if anybody wishes to injure another he need only say to Sûrya, one of the most important among the solar deities, "Smite such a one, and I will give you an offering," and Sûrya, to get the offering, will smite him. Çiva, who is connected with the Vedic god Rudra, is in the Mahabharata clothed in terrible "forms," being armed with the trident and wearing a necklace of skulls; he exacts a bloody cultus, and is the chief of the mischievous spirits and vampires that frequent places of execution and burial-grounds. Vishnu, the other great god of Hinduism, though less fierce than Çiva, is nevertheless, on one side of his character, an inexorable god; and Krishna, as accepted by Vishnuism, is a crafty hero of a singularly doubtful moral character. In Brahmanism religion is largely replaced by magic, the rites themselves are raised to the rank of divinities, the priests become the gods of gods. And the point of view from which these man-gods look upon human conduct is expressed in the Satapatha Brâhmana, where it is said that fees paid to priests are like sacrifices offered to gods—those who gratify them are placed in a state of bliss. Ritual observances are essential for a man's well-being both in this life and in the life to come, where paradise, hell, or transmigration awaits the dead. In the Brâhmanas immortality, or at least longevity, is promised to those who rightly understand and practise the rites of sacrifice, while those who are deficient in this respect depart before their natural term of life to the next world, where they are weighed in a balance and receive good or evil according to their deeds. To repeat sacred texts a certain number of times is also laid down as a condition of salvation, and the doctrine is gradually developed that a single invocation of the divine name cancels a whole life of iniquity and crime. In the preface to the Prem Sâgar, which displays the religion of the Hindus at the present day, it is said that those who even ignorantly sing the praises of the greatness of Krishn Chand are rewarded with final beatitude, just as a person would acquire eternal life by partaking of the drink of immortality though he did not know what he was drinking.

At the same time we also find a variety of social duties



inculcated in the sacred books of India—humanity even to enemies and slaves, filial piety, charity, hospitality, veracity; and in the Sûtras the doctrine appears that in order to obtain the chief fruit of sacrifice it is necessary to practise the moral virtues in addition to the rite. But this doctrine is singularly free from any reference to the justice of gods. In the Upanishads and Buddhistic books it is distinctly formulated in the idea of *karma*, according to which each act of the soul, good or bad, inevitably and naturally works out its full effect to the sweet or bitter end without the intervention of any deity to apportion the reward or the punishment. Buddha did not base his system on any belief in gods; hence there is no place in it for a ritual nor for sin in the sense of offending a supernatural being. He that is pure in heart is the true priest, not he that knows the Vedas; the Vedas are nothing, the priests are of no account, save as they be morally of repute. If the genuine Buddhist can be said to worship any higher power, it is the moral order which never fails to assert itself in the law of cause and effect. But Buddha's followers were less metaphysical, and "the clouds returned after the rain." The old gods of Brahmanism came back, Buddha himself was deified as an omniscient and everlasting god, and Buddhism incorporated most of the local deities and demons of those nations it sought to convert. From being originally a metaphysical and ethical doctrine, it was thus transformed into a religion full of ritualism, and, it should be added, profusely mixed with magic. In Lamaism, especially, ritual is elevated to the front rank of importance; and the muttering of certain mystic formulas and short prayers is alleged to be far more efficacious than mere moral virtue as a means of gaining the glorious heaven of eternal bliss, the paradise of the fabulous Buddha of boundless light.

The gods of ancient Greece were on the whole beneficent beings, who conferred blessings upon those who secured their goodwill. Zeus protects the life of the family, city, and nation; he is a god of victory and victorious peace, who gathers the hosts against Troy, and saves Greece from Persia; he brings the ships to land; he is "the warder off of evil." But neither he nor the other gods bestow their favours for nothing; Xenophon says that they assist with good advice those who worship them regularly, but

take revenge on those who neglect them. They punish severely even offences committed against them accidentally, and not infrequently they display actual malevolence towards men by seducing them into sin or inflicting harm upon them out of sheer envy. In other respects, also, they are by no means models of morality; but this does not prevent them from acting as administrators of justice any more than a human judge is supposed to lose all regard for it because he himself transgresses the rules of morality in some particular of private life. "For great crimes," says Herodotus, "great punishments at the hands of the gods are in store." Dike, or Justice, the terrible virgin "who breathes against her enemies a destructive wrath," is represented sometimes as the daughter, sometimes as the companion of the all-seeing Zeus; and, as Welcker observes, Zeus was not only a god among other gods, but also the deity solely and abstractedly. Since ancient times the murder of a kinsman was an offence against Zeus and under the ban of the Erinyes, and later on all bloodshed, if the victim had any rights at all within the city, became a sin which needed purification. Zeus protected guests and suppliants, punished children who reproached their aged parents, was a guardian of the family property, guarded boundaries, was no friend of falsehood, punished perjury.

According to earlier Greek beliefs retribution was exclusively restricted to this earthly existence, and if the guilty person himself escaped the punishment for his deed it fell on some of his descendants. The transference of Menelaus to the Elysian plain, spoken of in the *Odyssey*, was not a reward for his virtue—indeed, he was not particularly conspicuous for any of the Homeric virtues—but a privilege resulting from his being married to Zeus' daughter Helena; and if the perjurer was tortured in Hades the simple reason was that he had called down upon himself such torture in his oath. In later times we meet with the doctrine of retribution after death, not only in the speculations of isolated philosophers, but as a popular belief; but this belief seems to have been quite unconnected with any notion of Olympian justice. The souls in the world beyond the grave are sentenced by special judges; Aeschylus expressly says that it is another Zeus who administers justice there. For him Hades with

the powers by which it is governed exists only as a place where the guilty are punished, whereas for the virtuous he has no word of true hope; and other writers also have much more to tell about future punishments than about future rewards. Particularly prominent among the offences which are punished in Hades are, besides perjury, injuries to parents and guests—that is, offences which in this world are visited with the most powerful curses. According to Aeschylus, the retribution which the Erinyes—personifications of curses—have begun on earth is completed in the nether world, and according to Pythagoras, unpurified souls are kept chained there by the Erinyes without any hope of escape. We are, moreover, told that painters used to represent allegorical figures of curses in connection with their images of wicked dead. From all these facts I conclude that the notion of punishments in Hades did not arise from a belief in the justice of gods, but from the idea that the efficacy of a curse may extend beyond the grave—an idea which we have already met with both in Vedic texts and among certain savages, and of which the supposed punishment of perjury in Hades is only a particular instance.

As for the gods it should be added that the vulgar Greek opinion of their character was not shared by all. Euripides affirms that “none of the gods is bad,” and that “if the gods do aught that is base they are not gods.” Plato opposes the popular views that the deity induces men to commit crimes, that he is capable of feeling envy, and that evil-doers may avert divine punishments by sacrifices offered to the gods as bribes. God is good, he is never the author of evil to any one, and if the wicked are miserable the reason is that they require to be punished and are benefited by receiving punishment from God. Plutarch likewise asserts in the strongest terms that God is perfectly good and least of all wanting in justice and love, “the most beautiful of virtues and the best befitting the Godhead.”

The gods of the Romans were on the whole unsympathetic and lifeless beings, some of them even actually pernicious, as the god of Fever, who had a temple on the Palatine hill, and the god of Ill-fortune, who had an altar on the Esquiline hill. The relations between the gods and their worshippers were cold, ceremonial, legal. The chief thing was not to

break "the peace of the gods," or, when it was broken, to restore it. They were rendered propitious by "sanctity" and "piety." But sanctity was defined as "the knowledge of how we ought to worship them," and piety was only "justice towards the gods," the return for benefits received; Cicero asks, "What piety is due to a being from whom you receive nothing?" The divine law, *fas*, was distinguished from the human law, *jus*. To the former belonged not only the religious rites but the duties to the dead, as also the duties to certain living individuals. Offences against parents were avenged by the *divi parentum*; the duty of hospitality was enforced by the *diī hospitales* and Jupiter; boundaries were protected by Jupiter Terminalis and Terminus; and Jupiter, Dius Fidius, and Fides were the guardians of sworn faith.

The god of Israel was a powerful protector of his chosen people, but he was a severe master who inspired more fear than love. In the pre-prophetic period, at least, he was no model of goodness. He had unaccountable moods, his wrath often resembled "rather the insensate violence of angered nature than the reasonable indignation of a moralized personality"—as appears, for instance, from the suggestion of David that Saul's undeserved enmity might be due to the incitement of God. At the same time his severity was also a guardian of human relationships. It turned against children who were disrespectful to their parents, against murderers, adulterers, thieves, false witnesses—indeed, the whole criminal law was a revelation of the Lord. He was, moreover, a protector of the poor and needy, and a preserver of strangers. But offences against God were, in the Ten Commandments, mentioned before offences against man; religious rites were put on the same level with the rules of social morality; neglect of circumcision, or disregard of the precepts of ceremonial cleanliness, or sabbath-breaking, was punished with the same severity as the greatest crimes. "To the ordinary man," says Wellhausen, "it was not moral but liturgical acts that seemed to be truly religious." A different opinion, however, was expressed by the Prophets. They opposed the vice of the heart to the outward service of the ritual. God was said by them to desire not sacrifice but mercy, and to hate the hypocritical service of Israel with its feast-days and solemn assemblies; and the true fast was

declared to consist in moral well-doing. To them righteousness was the fundamental virtue of Yahveh, and if he punished Israel his anger was no longer a merely fitful outburst, unrelated to Israel's own wrongdoing, but an essential element of his righteousness. But, as Halévy observes, the truly national conceptions of the Hebrews were not those which the Prophets maintained, but those which they opposed. The importance of ritual was more than ever emphasized in the post-prophetic priestly code.

The opposition against ritualism which was started by the Prophets reached its height in Christ. Men are defiled not by external uncleanness, but by evil thoughts and evil deeds. "It is lawful to do well on the sabbath days." Those whose righteousness does not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. The first and great commandment is that which enjoins love to God, but the second, according to which a man shall love his neighbour as himself, "is like unto it." At the same time there are in the New Testament passages in which God's judgment of men seems to be represented as determined by theological dogma. The only sin which can never be forgiven either in this world or in the world to come is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; and the belief in Jesus is laid down as indispensable for salvation. According to St. Paul, a man is justified by faith alone, without the deeds of the law. This doctrine, which makes man's salvation dependent upon his acceptance of the Messiahship of Jesus, has had a lasting influence upon Christian theology, and has, together with certain other dogmas, led to that singular discrepancy between the notions of divine and human justice which has up to the present day characterized the chief branches of the Christian Church.

Some of the early Fathers maintained that the interference and suffering of Christ, in itself, unconditionally saved all souls and emptied hell for ever; but this theory never became popular. According to St. Augustine and, subsequently, Calvinian theology, the benefits of the atonement are limited to those whom God, of his sovereign pleasure, has from eternity arbitrarily elected, the effect of faith and conversion being not to save the soul, but simply to convince the soul that it is saved. A third theory—that of Pelagius, Arminius, and Luther—attributes

to the sufferings of Christ a conditional efficacy, depending upon personal faith in his vicarious atonement, whereas those who for some reason or other do not possess such faith are excluded from salvation. A fourth doctrine, which early began to be constructed by the Fathers and was adopted by the Roman Catholic and the consistent portion of the Episcopalian Church, declares that by Christ's vicarious suffering power is given to the Church, a priestly hierarchy, to save those who confess her authority and observe her rites, whilst all others are lost. Certain sectarians, like the Unitarians, or those "liberal Christians" who do not feel themselves tied by the dogmas of any special creed, are the only ones among whom we meet with the opinion that a free soul, who by the immutable laws which the Creator has established may choose between good and evil, is saved or lost just so far and so long as it partakes of either the former or the latter.

According to the leading doctrines of Christianity, then, the fates of men beyond the grave are determined by circumstances quite different from those which the moral consciousness by itself recognizes as virtue or vice. They are all doomed to death and hell in consequence of Adam's sin, and their salvation, if not absolutely predestined, can be effected only by sincere faith in the atonement of Christ or by valid reception of sacramental grace at the hands of a priest. Persons who on intellectual or moral grounds are unable to accept the dogma of atonement or to acknowledge the authority of an exacting hierarchy are subject to the most awful penalties for a sin committed by their earliest ancestor, and so are the countless millions of heathen who never even had an opportunity to embrace the Christian religion. Luther was considered to have shown an exceptional boldness when he expressed the hope that "our dear God would be merciful to Cicero, and to others like him." In the Westminster Confession of Faith the Divines declared the opinion that men not professing Christianity may be saved to be "very pernicious, and to be detested"; and in their Larger Catechism they expressly said that "they who, having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the laws of that religion which they profess." This doctrine has had many

adherents up to the present time, although a more liberal view in favour of virtuous heathen has obviously been gaining ground. Even in the case of Christians errors in belief on such subjects as church government, the Trinity, transubstantiation, original sin, and predestination, have been declared to expose the guilty to eternal damnation. In the seventeenth century it was a common theme of certain Roman Catholic writers that "Protestancy unrepented destroys salvation," while the Protestants on their part taxed Du Moulin with culpable laxity for admitting that some Roman Catholics might escape the torments of hell. Nathanael Emmons, the sage of Franklin, tells us that "it is absolutely necessary to approve of the doctrine of reprobation in order to be saved."

Besides the heathen there is another class of people whom Christian theology has condemned to hell for no fault of theirs—namely, infants who have died unbaptized. From a very early age the water of baptism was believed by the Christians to possess a magic power to wipe away sin, and since the days of St. Augustine it was deemed so indispensable for salvation that any child dying without "the bath of regeneration" was regarded as lost for ever. St. Augustine admitted that the punishment of such children was of the mildest sort, but other writers were more severe; St. Fulgentius condemned to "everlasting punishment in eternal fire" even infants who died in their mother's womb. However, the notion that unbaptized children will be tormented, gradually gave way to a more humane opinion. In the middle of the twelfth century Peter Lombard determined that the proper punishment of original sin, when no actual sin is added to it, is "the punishment of loss" (that is, loss of heaven and the sight of God), but not "the punishment of sense" (that is, positive torment). This doctrine was confirmed by Innocent III. and shared by the large majority of the schoolmen, who assumed the existence of a place called *limbus*, or *infernus puerorum*, where unbaptized infants will dwell without being subject to torture. But the older view was again set up by the Protestants, who generally maintained that the due punishment of original sin is, in strictness, damnation in hell, although many of them were inclined to think that if a child dies by misfortune before it is baptized, the parents' sincere intention

of baptizing it, together with their prayers, will be accepted with God for the deed. In the Confession of Augsburg the Anabaptistic doctrine is emphatically condemned; and although Zwingli rejected the dogma that infants dying without baptism are lost, and Calvin, in harmony with his theory of election, refused to tie the salvation of infants to an outward rite, the necessity of baptism as the ordinary channel of receiving grace appears to have been a general belief in the Reformed churches throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The damnation of infants was, in fact, an acknowledged doctrine of Calvinism, though an exception was made for the children of pious parents. But in the latter part of the eighteenth century Toplady, who was a vehement Calvinist, avowed his belief in the universal salvation of all departed infants, whether baptized or unbaptized. And a hundred years later Dr. Hodge thought he was justified in stating that the common opinion of evangelical Protestants was that "all who die in infancy are saved." The accuracy of this statement, however, seems somewhat doubtful. In 1883 Mr. Prentiss wrote, in *The Presbyterian Review*, with regard to the doctrine of infant salvation independently of baptism: "My own impression is that, had it been taught as unequivocally in the Presbyterian Church even a third of a century ago, by a theologian less eminent than Dr. Hodge for orthodoxy, piety, and weight of character, it would have called forth an immediate protest from some of the more conservative, old-fashioned Calvinists."

In order fully to realize the true import of the dogma of damnation it is necessary to consider the punishment in store for the condemned. The immense bulk of Christians have always regarded hell and its agonies as material facts. Origen, who was a Platonist and a heretic on many points, was severely censured for saying that the fire of hell was inward and of the conscience rather than outward and of the body; and in the later Middle Ages Scotus Erigena showed unusual audacity in questioning the locality of hell and the material tortures of the condemned. The punishment is burning—a penalty which even in the most barbaric codes is reserved for the very gravest crimes; and some great divines, like Jeremy Taylor and Jonathan Edwards, have been anxious to point out that the fire of hell is infinitely more painful than any fire on earth,



being "fierce enough to melt the very rocks and elements." This awful punishment also exceeds in dreadfulness anything which even the most vivid imagination can conceive, because it will last not for a passing moment, not for a year or a hundred, thousand, million, or milliard years, but for ever and ever. In case any doubt should arise as regards the physical capacity of the damned to withstand the heat, we are assured by some modern theologians that their bodies will be annealed like glass, or asbestos-like, or of the nature of salamanders. This, then, is the future state of the large majority of men, quite independently of any fault of their own, or of the degree of their "guilt." It would seem that even the felicity of the few who are saved must be seriously impaired by their contemplation of this endless and indescribable misery of the damned—but we are told that the case is just the reverse. They become as merciless as their god. Thomas Aquinas says that a perfect sight of the punishment of the damned is granted to them that they "may enjoy their beatitude and the grace of God more richly." And the Puritans, especially, have revelled in the idea that "the sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints for ever," as a sense of the opposite misery always increases the relish of any pleasure.

In the present times there is a distinct tendency among Christian theologians to humanize somewhat the doctrines of the future life. But if Christianity is to be judged by the dogmas which almost from its beginning until recently have been recognized by the immense majority of its adherents, it must be admitted that its conception of a heavenly Father and Judge has in certain points been utterly inconsistent with the most elementary notions of goodness and justice. Calvin himself avowed that the decree according to which the fall of Adam involved, without remedy, in eternal death so many nations together with their infant children, was a "horrible" one. "But," he adds, "no one can deny that God foreknew the future final fate of man before he created him, and that he did foreknow it because it was appointed by his own decree."

Like Christianity, Muhammadanism adorns its godhead with the highest moral attributes and at the same time ascribes to him decrees and actions which ill agree with those attributes. He is addressed as merciful and com-

passionate; but his love is restricted to "those who fear," and his mercy can be gained only by that submissiveness or self-surrender which is indicated by the very name of Islam. He demands a righteous life, he punishes the wrongdoer and rewards the charitable. Through his Prophet he has revealed to mankind both the rules of morality and the elements of a social system containing minute regulations for a man's conduct in various circumstances of life, with due rewards or penalties according to his fulfilment of these regulations. The whole constitution of the State has on it a divine stamp; as an Arab proverb says, "country and religion are twins." But foremost among duties is to believe in God and his Prophet. "God," it is said, "does not pardon polytheism and infidelity, but He can, if He willeth, pardon other crimes." And the "pillars of religion" are the five duties of reciting the *kalimah* or creed, of performing the five stated daily prayers, of fasting between dawn and sunset throughout the month of Ramaḍān, of giving the legal alms, and of making the pilgrimage to Mecca. These duties are based on clear sentences of the Koran, but the Traditions have raised the most trivial ceremonial observances into duties of great importance. It is true that hypocrisy and formalism without devotion were strongly condemned by Muhammad; but in Islam, as in other ritualistic religions, the chief importance is practically attached to the punctual performance of outward ceremonies. In the future life the felicity or suffering of each person will be proportionate to his merits or demerits, but the admittance into paradise depends in the first place on faith. "Those who believe, and act righteously, and are steadfast in prayer, and give alms, theirs is their hire with their Lord." On the other hand, those who have acknowledged the faith of Islam and yet acted wickedly will be punished in hell for a certain period, but will finally enter paradise. As regards the future state of certain infidels the Koran contains contradictory statements. In one place it is said, "Verily, whether it be of those who believe, or those who are Jews or Christians or Sabians, whosoever believe in God and the last day and act aright, they have their reward at their Lord's hand, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve." But this passage is considered to have been abrogated by another where it is stated that whoso desires

any other religion than Islam shall in the next world be among the lost. The punishments inflicted upon unbelievers are very similar to the torments of the Christian hell. But in one point, at least, the Muhammadan doctrine of the future life is more merciful than the dogmas of Christianity. The children of believers will all go to paradise, and the children of unbelievers are generally supposed to escape hell. Some think that they will be in the A'rāf, a place situated between heaven and hell; while others maintain that they will be servants to the true believers in paradise.

The formalism of Muhammadan orthodoxy has from time to time called forth protests from minds with deeper aspirations. The earlier Muhammadan mystics sought to impart life to the rigid ritual; and in the nineteenth century Bābīism revolted against orthodox Islam, opposing bigotry and enjoining friendly intercourse with persons of all religions. At present there are liberal Muhammadans who set aside the scholastic tradition, maintain the right of private interpretation of the Koran, and warmly uphold the adaptability of Islam to the most advanced ideas of civilization. To them Muhammad's mission was chiefly that of a moral reformer. "In Islam," says Syed Ameer Ali, "the service of man and the good of humanity constitute pre-eminently the service and worship of God."

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## CHAPTER IV

### The Improvement of the Gods

WE have seen that the gods of the simpler peoples are to a large extent, though not exclusively, of a malevolent character, that they as a rule take little interest in any kind of human conduct which does not affect their own welfare, but that some of them are also opposed to acts of ordinary wrongdoing. Among peoples of a higher culture, again, the gods are on the whole benevolent to mankind when duly propitiated. They by preference resent offences committed against themselves personally; but in many cases they at the same time avenge social wrongs of various kinds, act as superintendents of human justice, and are even looked upon as the originators and sustainers of the whole moral order of the world. The gods have thus experienced a gradual change for the better; until at last they are described as ideals of moral perfection, even though, when more closely scrutinized, their goodness and notions of justice are found to differ materially from what is deemed good and just in the case of men.

The malevolence of savage gods is in accordance with the theory that religion is born of fear. The assumed originators of misfortunes were naturally regarded as enemies to be propitiated; while fortunate events, if attracting sufficient attention and appearing sufficiently marvellous to suggest a supernatural cause, were commonly ascribed to beings who were too good to require worship. But growing reflection has a tendency to attribute more amiable qualities to the gods. The religious consciousness of men becomes less exclusively occupied with the hurts they suffer, and comes more and more to reflect upon the benefits they enjoy. The activity of a god which displays itself in a certain phenomenon, or group of phenomena, appears to them on some occasions

as a source of evil, but on other occasions as a source of good; hence the god is regarded as partly malevolent, partly benevolent, and in all circumstances as a being who must not be neglected. Moreover, a god who is by nature harmless or good may by proper worship be induced to assist man in his struggle against evil spirits. The protective function of nature gods becomes particularly important when the god is humanized also with regard to his shape, and consequently more or less dissociated from the natural phenomenon in which he originally manifested himself. Nothing, indeed, seems to have contributed more towards the improvement of nature gods than the expansion of their sphere of activity. When supernatural beings can exert their power in the various departments of life, men naturally choose for their gods those among them who with great power combine the greatest benevolence.

Men have selected their gods according to their usefulness. We have many direct instances of such a "supernatural selection." Among the Maori "a mere trifle, or natural casualty, will induce a native (or a whole tribe) to change his Atua." The negro, when disappointed in some of his speculations, or overtaken by some sad calamity, throws away his fetish, and selects a new one. When hard-pressed the Samoyed, after he has invoked his own deities in vain, addresses himself to the Russian god, promising to become his worshipper if he relieves him from his distress; and in most cases he is said to be faithful to his promise, though he may still try to keep on good terms with his former gods by occasionally offering them a sacrifice in secret. North American Indians attribute all their good or bad luck to their Manitou, and "if the Manitou has not been favourable to them, they quit him without any ceremony, and take another." Among many of the ancient Indians of Central America there was a regular and systematic selection of gods. Father Blas Valera says that their gods had annual rotations and were changed each year in accordance with the superstitions of the people. "The old gods were forsaken as infamous, or because they had been of no use, and other gods and demons were elected. . . Sons, when they inherited, either accepted or repudiated the gods of their fathers, for they were not allowed to hold their pre-

eminence against the will of the heir. Old men worshipped other greater deities, but they likewise dethroned them, and set up others in their places when the year was over, or the age of the world, as the Indians had it. Such were the gods which all the nations of Mexico, Chiapa, and Guatemala worshipped, as well as those of Vera Paz, and many other Indians. They thought that the gods selected by themselves were the greatest and most powerful of all the gods." These are crude instances of a process which in some form or other must have been an important motive force in religious evolution by making the gods better suited to meet the wants of their believers.

Men not only select as their gods such supernatural beings as may be most useful to them in the struggle for life, but also magnify their good qualities in worshipping them. Praise and exaggerating eulogy are common in the mouth of a devout worshipper. In ancient Egypt the god of each petty state was within it said to be the ruler of the gods, the creator of the world, and the giver of all good things. So also in Chaldea the god of a town was addressed by its inhabitants with the most exalted epithets, as the master or king of all the gods. The Vedic poets were engrossed in the praise of the particular deity they happened to be invoking, exaggerating his attributes to the point of inconsistency. The Hindus say that by praise a person may obtain from the gods whatever he desires. There is a Chinese story which amusingly illustrates this little weakness of so many gods. At the hottest season of the year there was a heavy fall of snow at Soochow. The people, in their consternation, went to the temple of the Great Prince to pray. Then the spirit moved one of them to say: "You now address me as Your Honour. Make it Your Excellency, and, though I am but a lesser deity, it may be well worth your while to do so." Thereupon the people began to use the latter term, and the snow stopped at once. "Every virtue, every excellence," says Hume, "must be ascribed to the divinity, and no exaggeration will be deemed sufficient to reach those perfections with which he is endowed." But though the tendency of the worshipper to extol his god beyond all measure is largely due to the idea that praise or flattery is just as pleasant to superhuman as to human ears, it may also be rooted in a sincere will to believe or in genuine

admiration. That nations of a higher culture, especially, have a strong faith in the power and benevolence of their gods, is easy to understand when we consider that these are exactly the peoples who have been most successful in their national endeavours. As the Greeks attributed their victory over the Persians to the assistance of Zeus, so the Romans maintained that the grandeur of their city was the work of the gods whom they had propitiated by sacrifices.

The benevolence of a god, however, does not imply that he acts as a moral judge. A friendly god is not generally supposed to bestow his favours gratuitously; it is hardly probable, then, that he should meddle with matters of social morality out of sheer kindness and of his own accord. But by an invocation he may be induced to reward virtue and punish vice. The retributive activity of many gods is evidently very closely connected with the blessings and curses of men. In order to actualize their good or evil wishes men appeal to a supernatural being, or simply bring in his name when they pronounce a blessing or a curse to give it that mystic efficacy which the plain word lacks; and if this is regularly done in connection with some particular kind of conduct, the idea may grow up that the supernatural being rewards or punishes it even independently of any human invocation. In Morocco the very patron saint of a village is expressly said not to care about the behaviour of its inhabitants outside the precincts of his sanctuary; yet I found that some particular saints not only resent theft committed at their own shrines, but also punish robbers who merely pass by, either preventing them from proceeding further until they are caught, or making it impossible for them to sell the stolen object so that they are found out at last. The reason for their hostility to an offence which does not concern them is obviously due to the fact that those saints have been so often appealed to in oaths taken by persons suspected of theft that they have at last come to be looked upon as permanent enemies of thieves and guardians of property. At Fez there are certain saints who are said to be so much opposed to wrongdoers that they do not even suffer them to live in the neighbourhood of their shrines, and these saints are exactly those by whom it is considered most dangerous to swear; hence we may

assume that they have acquired their remarkable moral sensitiveness just by being such severe avengers of perjury. Moreover, powerful curses may be personified as supernatural beings; or the magic energy inherent in a curse or a blessing may become an attribute of the chief god, owing to the tendency of such a god to attract supernatural forces which are in harmony with his general nature. Various departments of social morality have thus come to be placed under the supervision of gods—such as the right of property, charity and hospitality, the submissiveness of children, and truth-speaking and fidelity to a given promise.

Spirits or gods are frequently invoked in curses referring to theft. On the Gold Coast, for example, "when the owner of land sees that some one has been making a clearing on his land, he cuts the young inner branches of the palm tree and hangs them about the place where the trespass has been committed. As he hangs each leaf he says something to the following effect: 'The person who did this and did not make it known to me before he did it, if he comes here to do any other thing, may fetish Katawere (or Tanor or Fofie or other fetish) kill him and all his family.'" On the landmarks of the ancient Babylonians, generally consisting of stone pillars in the shape of a phallus, imprecations were inscribed with appeals to various deities. In Greece boundaries were protected by Zeus ὄπιος, in Rome by Jupiter Terminalis or Terminus, in Israel by Yahveh; and in all these cases there are indications of a connection between the god and a curse. That the boundary stones dedicated to Zeus were originally charged with imprecations appears from a passage in Plato's *Laws*; and, apart from other evidence to be found in Semitic antiquities, there is the anathema of Deuteronomy, "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark." In some parts of England a custom of annually "beating the bounds" of a parish has survived up to the present time, and this ceremony was accompanied by religious services, in which a clergyman invoked curses on him who should transgress the bounds of his neighbour, and blessings on him who should regard the landmarks; and a ceremony of this kind was a couple of years ago performed in the centre of London.

Among peoples of culture charity has often been strenu-



ously enjoined by their religions; and here again we find supernatural punishments and rewards connected with the curses and blessings of men. The ancient Greeks believed that the beggar had his Erinyes, his avenging demon, which was obviously only a personification of his curse. It is said in the Proverbs: "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse." The same idea is expressed in Ecclesiasticus: "Turn not away thine eye from the needy, and give him none occasion to curse thee: for if he curse thee in the bitterness of his soul, his prayer shall be heard of him that made him. . . . A prayer out of a poor man's mouth reacheth to the ears of God, and his judgment cometh speedily." But it is also said in the same book: "Stretch thine hand unto the poor, that thy blessing may be perfected. A gift hath grace in the sight of every man living." While the curses and blessings of the poor partly account for the fact that charity has come to be regarded as a religious duty, the chief cause of the extraordinary stress which the higher religions put on the duty of charity, however, seems to lie in the connection between almsgiving and sacrifice. When food is offered as a tribute to a god, the god is supposed to enjoy its spiritual part only, while the substance of it is left behind and is eaten by the poor. And when the offering is continued in ceremonial survival in spite of the growing conviction that, after all, the deity does not need and cannot profit by it, the poor become the natural heirs of the god, and the almsgiver inherits the merit of the sacrificer. The chief virtue of the act, then, lies in the self-abnegation of the donor, and its efficacy is measured by the "sacrifice" which it costs him.

Many instances might be quoted of sacrificial food being left for the poor or being distributed among them; and in other cases we find that almsgiving itself is regarded as a form of sacrifice, or takes the place of it. In the sacred books of India the two things are repeatedly mentioned side by side. When the destruction of the Temple with its altar filled the Jews with alarm as they thought of their unatoned sins, Johanan ben Zakkai comforted them by saying: "You have another means of atonement as powerful as the altar, and that is the work of charity, for it is said: 'I desired mercy, and not sacrifice.'" Many

other passages show how closely the Jews associated almsgiving with sacrifice; and alms were systematically collected in the synagogues, and officers were appointed to make the collection. So, also, among the early Christians the collection of alms for the relief of the poor was an act of the Church life itself; almsgiving took place in public worship—nay, formed itself a part of worship. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of almsgiving as a sacrifice of thanksgiving which continues after the Jewish altar has been done away with. St. Augustine says: "The sacrifice of the Christians is the alms bestowed upon the poor."

Hospitality towards strangers is a custom which, as it seems, prevails universally among the lower races while in their native state, as also among the peoples of culture at the earlier stages of their civilization. The stranger is often welcomed with special marks of honour; the best seat is assigned to him; the best food at the host's disposal is set before him; he takes precedence over all the members of the household; it is said that "the guest while in the house is its lord." And hospitality is not only regarded as a duty of the first order, but has in a remarkable degree been associated with religion. The Iroquois were told by their religious instructors: "If a stranger wander about your abode, welcome him to your home, be hospitable to him, speak to him with kind words, and forget not always to mention the Great Spirit." The Kalmucks believe that want of hospitality will be punished by angry gods. In the sacred books of India hospitality is repeatedly spoken of as a most important duty, the discharge of which will be amply rewarded, whereas he who does not feed his guests "lives not, though he breathes." According to Hesiod, Zeus himself is wrath with him who does evil to a suppliant or a guest, and at last, in requital for his deed, lays on him a bitter penalty; and Plato says that he who has a spark of caution in him will do his best to pass through life without sinning against a stranger, because "he who is most able is the genius and the god of the stranger, who follows in the train of Zeus, the god of strangers." In Rome the *dii hospitales* and Jupiter were on guard over a guest; hence the duties towards him were even more stringent than those towards a relative. The God of Israel was a preserver of strangers; and in

the Talmud hospitality is described as "the most important part of divine worship." Muhammad said: "Whoever believes in God and the day of resurrection must respect his guest"; but the idea that a guest enjoys divine protection prevailed among the Arabs long before the times of the Prophet.

That a stranger, who in other circumstances is treated as an inferior being or a foe, liable to be robbed and killed with impunity, should enjoy such extraordinary privileges as a guest, is certainly one of the most curious contrasts which present themselves to a student of the moral ideas of mankind. It can only be explained as an outcome of superstitious beliefs. The unknown stranger, like everything unknown and everything strange, arouses a feeling of mysterious awe in superstitious minds. It is significant that in the writings of ancient India, Greece, and Rome guests are mentioned next after gods as due objects of regard. According to Homeric notions, "the gods, in the likeness of strangers from far countries, put on all manner of shapes, and wander through the cities, beholding the violence and the righteousness of men"; and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews writes: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." During the first days of my stay at a place in the Great Atlas in the south of Morocco the natives, in spite of their hostility towards Europeans, said that they were quite pleased with my coming to see them, because I had brought with me rain and an increase of the import of victuals, which just before my arrival had been very scarce. The stranger may be a source of good fortune either involuntarily, as a bearer of luck, or through his good wishes; and there is every reason to hope that, if treated hospitably, he will return the kindness of his host with a blessing. But the visiting stranger is, at the same time, regarded as a potential source of evil. He may bring with him disease or ill-luck; he is commonly believed to be versed in magic; and the evil wishes and curses of a stranger are greatly feared, owing partly to his quasi-supernatural character, partly to the close contact in which he comes with the host and his belongings, which makes him particularly able to transfer to them evil influences. Among the Herero, in South-West Africa, "no curse is regarded as

heavier than that which one who has been inhospitably treated would hurl at those who have driven him from the hearth." According to Greek ideas, guests and suppliants had their Erinyes—personifications of their curses; and it would be difficult to attribute any other meaning to "the genius and the god of the stranger, who follows in the train of Zeus," spoken of by Plato, and to the Roman *dii hospitales*, in their capacity of avengers of injuries done to guests. Aeschylus represents Apollo as saying: "I shall assist him (Orestes), and rescue my own suppliant; for terrible both among men and gods is the wrath of a refugee, when one abandons him with intent." One of the sacred books of India contains a chapter the object of which is to show the absolute necessity of feeding a guest, owing to the fact that, "if offended, he might burn the house with the flames of his anger"; for "a guest comes to the house resembling a burning fire," "a guest rules over the world of Indra."

Among many peoples, particularly those of archaic culture, there is a close connection between the father's or parents' authority over their children and religious beliefs, and a very important reason for this connection is the extreme importance attached to the curses and blessings of parents. The Israelites believed that parents, and especially the father, could by their blessings or curses determine the fate of their children; and we have reason to assume that the reward which in the fifth commandment is held out to respectful children was originally a result of parental blessings. We still meet with the original idea in Ecclesiasticus, where it is said: "Honour thy father in word and deed, that a blessing may come upon thee from him. For the blessing of the father establisheth the houses of children; but the curse of the mother rooteth out the foundations." The Moors have a proverb that "if the saints curse you the parents will cure you, but if the parents curse you the saints will not cure you"; in other words, the curse of a parent is even stronger than that of a saint. The notion that the parents' blessings beget prosperity and that their curses bring ruin prevailed in ancient Greece, as is directly testified by Plato. We may assume that originally the efficacy of their curses and blessings was ascribed to a magic power immanent in the spoken word itself, and that their Erinyes, who were no

less terrible than the Erinyes of neglected guests, were only personifications of their curses; but in this, as in other similar circumstances, the fulfilment of the curse or the blessing came afterwards to be looked upon as an act of divine justice. According to Plato, Nemesis, the messenger of justice, watches over unbecoming words uttered to a parent, and Hesiod says that if anybody reproaches an aged father or mother "Zeus himself is wroth." It also seems to be beyond all doubt that the *divi parentum*, or "parental gods," of the Romans, like their *dii hospitales*, were nothing but personified curses; for it is said that "if a son beat his parent and he cry out, the son shall be devoted to the parental gods for destruction." In aristocratic families in Russia children used to stand in mortal fear of their father's curses; and the country people still believe that a marriage without the parents' approval will call down the wrath of Heaven on the heads of the young couple. Various uncivilized peoples, also, ascribe great efficacy to the curses or blessings of parents.

Lying is frequently attended with divine punishment. This is particularly the case in the higher religions, but instances of it are also found among savages. We are told that among the West African Fjort a fetish deprived a man of his power of speech because he lied, and that the earth-spirit turned into a pillar of clay a woman who said she had no peas for sale when she had her basket full of them; and the Nandi, in British East Africa, believe that "God punishes lying by striking the untruthful person with lightning." That gods are so often looked upon as guardians of truth and fidelity to promises is no doubt mainly a result of the common practice of confirming a statement or promise by an oath. When an ancient Egyptian wished to give assurance of his honesty and good faith he called Thoth, "the judge in heaven," to witness. The Zoroastrians swore by Mithra, who was a protector of truth, fidelity, and covenants, the Greeks by Zeus, who was "no abettor of falsehoods," the Romans by Jupiter and *Dius Fidius*, who were gods of treaties. A god is more able than ordinary mortals to master the processes of nature, and he may also better know whether the sworn word be true or false. It is undoubtedly on account of their superior knowledge that sun or moon or

light gods are so frequently appealed to in oaths. The Egyptian god Amon Râ, the "lord of truth," is a solar and Thoth a lunar deity. In a Babylonian hymn the moon god is appealed to as the guardian of truth. The Zoroastrian Mithra, who "has a thousand senses and sees every man that tells a lie," is closely connected with the sun, and Rashnu Razista, "the truest true" or the genius of truth, is considered to be an offshoot either of Mithra or Ahura Mazda himself. Dius Fidius seems originally to have been a spirit of the heaven and a wielder of the lightning, closely allied to the great Jupiter. Zeus is all-seeing, the infallible spy of both gods and men. Owing to its invocation of supernatural sanction, perjury is considered the most heinous of all acts of falsehood, but it has a tendency to make even the ordinary lie or breach of faith a matter of religious concern. If a god is frequently appealed to in oaths, a general hatred of lying and unfaithfulness may become one of his attributes, as is suggested by various facts quoted above. There is every reason to believe that a god is not, in the first place, appealed to because he is looked upon as a guardian of veracity and good faith, but that he has come to be looked upon as a guardian of these duties because he has been frequently appealed to in connection with them.

Where the oath is an essential element in the judicial proceedings, as it was in the archaic State, the consequence is that the guardianship of gods is extended to the whole sphere of justice. Truth and justice are repeatedly mentioned hand in hand as matters of divine concern, and the same gods as are appealed to in oaths or ordeals are also frequently described as judges of human conduct. Zeus presided over assemblies and trials; according to a law of Solon, the judges of Athens had to swear by him. And the Erinyes, the personifications of oaths and curses, are sometimes represented by poets and philosophers as guardians of right in general.

We have still to consider another set of facts which have tended to make gods moral specialists. In the case of homicide the notion of a persecuting ghost may be replaced by the notion of an avenging god. Confusions are common in the world of mystery; doings or functions attributed to one being may be transferred to another—this is a rule of which important examples have been

given above. Among the Omaha, a Dakotan tribe of North American Indians, though the revengeful ghost of the murdered man was not lost sight of, the deed was at the same time considered offensive to Wakanda; no one wished to eat with the murderer; they said: "If we eat with the man whom Wakanda hates for his crime, Wakanda will hate us." In the Chinese books there are numerous instances of persons haunted by the souls of their victims on their death-bed, and in most of these cases the ghosts state expressly that they are avenging themselves with the special authorization of Heaven. The Greek belief in the Erinyes of a murdered man no doubt originated in the earlier notion of a persecuting ghost, whose anger or curses in later times were personified as an independent spirit. And the transformation went further still: the Erinyes were represented as the ministers of Zeus, who by punishing the murderer carried out his divine will. Zeus was considered the originator of the rites of purification; at his altar Theseus underwent purification for the shedding of kindred blood. The ritual uncleanness ascribed to a manslayer was thus transformed to spiritual impurity.

In yet another way the defiling effect attributed to the taking of human life has had an influence upon religious ideas. Such defilement is shunned not only by men but, in a still higher degree, by gods, whose holiness is very sensitive to any kind of pollution. The shedding of human blood is commonly prohibited in sacred places. At Athens the prosecution for homicide began with debarring the criminal from all sanctuaries and assemblies consecrated by religious observances. When David had in his heart to build a temple, God said to him: "Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood." A decree of the penitential discipline of the Christian Church, which was enforced even against emperors and generals, forbade any one whose hands had been imbrued in blood to approach the altar without a preparatory period of penance. And while, for fear of contaminating anything holy, casual restrictions have been imposed on all kinds of manslaughter, more stringent rules have been laid down for persons permanently connected with the religious cult. The "holy men" of the North American Indians were said

to be by their function absolutely forbidden to shed human blood. The Druids of Gaul never went to war, presumably in order to keep themselves free from blood-pollution; it is true, they sacrificed human victims to their gods, but those they burnt. To the same class of facts belong those decrees of the Christian Church which forbade clergymen taking part in a battle. Moreover, if a Christian priest passed a sentence of death he was punished with degradation and imprisonment for life; nor was he allowed to write or dictate anything with a view to bringing about such a sentence. He must not perform a surgical operation by help of fire or iron. And if he killed a robber in order to save his life, he had to do penance till his death. The hands which had to distribute the blood of the Lamb of God were not to be polluted with the blood of those for whose salvation it was shed. It cannot be doubted that this horror of blood-pollution has a share in that regard for human life which from the beginning, and especially in early times, was a characteristic of Christianity; although in other respects, also, Christian feelings and beliefs had an inherent tendency to evoke such a sentiment.

It has been said that when men ascribe to their gods a mental constitution similar to their own they also *eo ipso* consider them to approve of virtue and disapprove of vice. But this conclusion is certainly not true in general. As has been already pointed out, malevolent gods cannot be supposed to feel emotions which essentially presuppose altruistic sentiments, and an invocation is frequently required to induce even benevolent gods to interfere with the worldly affairs of men. Moreover, where the system of private retaliation prevails, not even the extension of human analogies to the world of supernatural beings would lead to the idea of a god who of his own accord punishes social wrongs. But it is quite probable that such analogies have in some cases made gods guardians of morality at large, especially ancestor gods. These may readily be supposed not only to preserve their old feelings with regard to virtue and vice, but also to take a more active interest in the morals of the living; and they are notoriously opposed to any deviation from ancient custom. I also admit that the conception of a great or supreme god may perhaps, independently of his origin, involve retributive



justice as a natural consequence of his power and benevolence towards his people. Yet it is obvious that even a god like Zeus was more influenced by the invocation of a suppliant than by his sense of justice. Dr. Farnell points out that the epithets which designate him as the god to whom those stricken with guilt can appeal are far more in vogue in actual Greek cult than those which attribute to him the function of vengeance and retribution. Hermes was addressed by thieves as their patron. According to the Talmud, "the thief invokes God while he breaks into the house." In Morocco even the sultan of all the saints, Mûlai 'Abdlqâder, has the epithet "the patron of liars," and is said to be compelled to assist thieves and liars who invoke him, although he may afterwards punish them for their behaviour. And the Italian bandit begs the Virgin herself to bless his endeavours.

At the same time we must again remember that men ascribe to their gods not only ordinary human qualities but excellences of various kinds, and among these may also be a strong desire to punish wickedness and to reward virtue. The gods of monotheistic religions in particular have such a multitude of the most elevated attributes that it would be astonishing if they had remained unconcerned about the morals of mankind. If flattery or admiration makes the deity all-wise, all-powerful, all-good, they also make him the supreme judge of human conduct. And there is yet another reason for investing him with the moral government of the world. The claims of justice are not fully satisfied on this earth, where it only too often happens that virtue is left unrewarded and vice escapes unpunished, that right succumbs and wrong triumphs; hence persons with deep moral feelings and a religious or philosophical bent of mind are apt to look for a future adjustment through the intervention of the deity, who alone can repair the evils and injustices of the present. This demand of final retribution is sometimes so strongly developed that it even leads to the belief in a deity when no other proof of his existence is found convincing. Kant maintained that we must postulate a future life in which everybody's happiness is proportionate to his virtue, and that such a postulate involves the belief in a god of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, who governs the moral as well as the physical world. Not even

Voltaire could rid himself of the notion of a rewarding and avenging deity, whom, if he did not exist, "it would be necessary to invent."

The belief in a god who acts as a guardian of worldly morality undoubtedly gives emphasis to its rules. To the social and legal sanctions a new one is added, which derives particular strength from the supernatural power and knowledge of the deity. The divine avenger can punish those who are beyond the reach of human justice and those whose secret wrongs even escape the censure of their fellow-men. But, on the other hand, there are also certain circumstances which considerably detract from the influence of the religious sanction when compared with other sanctions of morality. The supposed punishments and rewards of the future life have the disadvantage of being conceived as very remote; and fear and hope decreases in inverse ratio to the distance of their objects. Men commonly live in the happy illusion that death is far off, even though it in reality is very near, and therefore the retribution after death also appears distant and unreal and is comparatively little thought of by the majority of people who believe in it. Moreover, there seems to be time left for penance and repentance. Manzoni himself admitted, in his defence of Roman Catholicism, that many people think it an easy matter to procure that feeling of contrition by which, according to the doctrine of the Church, sins may be cancelled, and therefore encourage themselves in the commission of crime through the facility of pardon. The frequent assumption that the moral law would hardly command obedience without the belief in retribution beyond the grave is contradicted by an overwhelming array of facts. We hear from trustworthy witnesses that unadulterated savages follow their own rules of morality no less strictly, or perhaps more strictly, than civilized people follow theirs. Nay, it is a common experience that contact with a higher civilization exercises a deteriorating influence upon the conduct of uncultured races, although we may be sure that Christian missionaries do not fail to impart the doctrine of hell to their savage converts.

It has also been noticed that a high degree of religious devotion is frequently accompanied with great laxity of morals. The orientalist Wallin, who had an intimate

and extensive knowledge of Muhammadan peoples, often found that those Moslems who attended to their prayers most regularly were the greatest scoundrels. "One of the most remarkable traits in the character of the Copts," says Lane, "is their bigotry"; and at the same time they are represented as "deceitful, faithless, and abandoned to the pursuit of worldly gain, and to indulgence in sensual pleasure." Among two hundred Italian murderers Ferri did not find one who was irreligious; and Naples, which has the worst record of any European city for crimes against the person, is also the most religious city in Europe. On the other hand, according to Dr. Havelock Ellis, "it seems extremely rare to find intelligently irreligious men in prison"; and Laing, who himself was anything but sceptical, observed that in no country in Europe was there so much morality and so little religion as in Switzerland. Most religions contain an element which constitutes a real peril to the morality of their votaries. They have introduced a new kind of duties—duties towards gods; and, as we have noticed above, even where religion has entered into close union with worldly morality, much greater importance has been attached to ceremonies or worship or the niceties of belief than to good behaviour towards fellow-men. People think that they may make up for lack of the latter by orthodoxy or pious performances. Smollett observes in his *Travels into Italy* that it is held more infamous to transgress the slightest ceremonial institution of the Church of Rome than to transgress any moral duty; that a murderer or adulterer will be easily absolved by the Church, and even maintain his character in society; but that a man who eats a pigeon on a Saturday is abhorred as a monster of reprobation. Simonde de Sismondi wrote: "The more regular a vicious man has been in observing the commandments of the Church, the more he feels in his heart that he can dispense with the observance of that celestial morality to which he ought to sacrifice his depraved propensities." And how many a Protestant does not imagine that by going to church on Sundays he may sin more freely on the six days between?

It should also be remembered that the religious sanction of moral rules only too often leads to an external observance of these rules from purely selfish motives. Every religion presents innumerable examples of people who do "good

deeds" only in expectation of heavenly reward. The argument, "Obey the law because it will profit you to do so," constitutes the fundamental motive of Deuteronomy, as appears from phrases like these: "That it may go well with thee," "That thy days may be prolonged." And Christianity itself has, essentially, been regarded as a means of gaining a blessed hereafter. Did not Paley define virtue as "the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness"? As for the influence which Christianity has exercised on the moral life of its adherents, I agree with Professor Hobhouse that its chief strength lies, not in its abstract doctrines, but in the simple personal following of Christ—in moral education example plays a more important part than precept. But even in this point it seems to have little reason to boast of its achievements.

